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ABSTRACT

School dropouts have been a substantial problem to educators since public education began. This study examined the dropout statistics of selected public schools in the Mississippi Gulf Coast counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson. Subjects included school superintendents (N=29) randomly selected from the 153 Mississippi school districts and educators (N=69) at all levels from the selected Gulf Coast counties. The results supported the hypothesis that there would be no significant difference in the rate of dropouts when comparing schools in the selected districts with nonrandom districts. Formal dropout prevention programs did not appear to make a significant difference in dropout rates of school districts in the random sample and no significant differences in the dropout rates of the selected school districts and the State of Mississippi were found. The dropout rate of the non-random group was significantly higher than the national rate, while the random group showed no significant differences from the national rate. County school districts had a significantly higher participation in staff development related to dropouts than did municipal districts. There was a significant difference by position as to who was responsible for dropout prevention, and a significant difference in the way county and municipal respondents estimated comparisons of their own dropouts to those of their neighbors. (ABL)

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AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT DROPOUTS IN SELECTED MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT DROPOUTS IN SELECTED MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Introduction

School dropouts have been a substantial problem to educators since public education began. There have been many cyclical programs designed to reduce the number of dropouts over many years. What can be learned by making an analysis of dropouts in a given area?

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to analyze the dropout statistics of selected public schools in the state of Mississippi and the counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Hypotheses

HO1: There will be no significant difference in the rate of dropouts when comparing schools in the selected school districts with nonrandom districts.

HO2: There will be no significant difference in the dropout rates of school districts which have formal dropout prevention programs and those who do not.

HO3: There will be no significant difference in the dropout rates of school districts which have staff development on the problem of dropouts and those who do not.

HO4: There will be no significant difference in the dropout rates of the selected school districts when compared to the State of Mississippi.

HO5: There will be no significant difference in the dropout rates of the selected school districts when compared to the nation.

Definition of Terms

A **dropout** is any student who has formally enrolled in any school in Mississippi in any given year and during that period of time was formally recorded as a dropout for that same year.

A **formal dropout prevention program** is one in which a school district allocates at least one person to the full-time task of working with former dropouts, identified potential dropouts, and/or with parents in the same category.

A **dropout rate** is determined by calculating the percentage the number of dropouts is of the total enrollment for a given school year. It was also found in the review of the related literature that the term **dropout rate** is used to refer to the percentage the number of students who graduate is of the number who started kindergarten 13 years earlier.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the students in the selected school districts represent a normal distribution of intelligence.

It was further assumed that the records contained in the various schools and by the State Department of Education were accurate.

Delimitation

The scope of this study was the 1986-87 school year.

Limitations

This study was limited to the 30 randomly selected school districts and the districts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Significance of the Study

It is important to identify commonalities as well as differences within school districts. It is possible that enough data may be collected and analyzed to clarify problems, make suggestions for followup, and provide school districts in general with enough data to encourage positive action toward slowing down the trend, if in fact a trend exists, that leads in a negative direction.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A dropout has been defined as "any student who is under age 18 and has not graduated from high school and is not attending any public school or otherwise receiving an education pursuant to law for the full term of the school district in which he or she resides. The student who is absent for 20 consecutive days and for whom no other school has requested his records is also considered a dropout." (McBee, 1986).

The Department of Education sets the current national dropout rate at approximately thirty percent, (only seventy percent of the children who enter first grade actually graduate) with an estimated 3789 dropouts daily. In 1985, three million seniors graduated from high school while one million did not. In some cities more than fifty percent of students drop out of school. Chicago estimates its dropout rate at forty percent with one school reporting almost sixty-three percent. New York has reported that forty-five percent of the students who were ninth graders in 1980 were not there to graduate. Detroit has reported that two-thirds of the students who were ninth graders in 1982 did not graduate in 1985. (Grossnickle, 1986). During the 1986 school year in Boston, the number of high school dropouts exceeded the

number of graduates. (U. S. Department of Education, 1986). The failure of the urban schools is tied largely to the condition of the inner-city populations. (Grossnickle, 1986).

Slightly over one-half of all dropouts are from families with a lower socio-economic background. The highest dropout rate is in grade eleven and the lowest dropout rate is in grade nine. Thirty percent of all dropouts do so in junior high. This is thought to be due to the fact that the junior high years are a critical period in the education of remedial students - those with low IQs, those who have failed several grades, and those who are unable to perform high school work. (Cleckner, 1971). However, it is a misconception to assume that all dropouts have a low IQ. Most dropouts are of average intellect and are not incapable low IQ juveniles. A much more important factor appears to be the students socio-economic class. (Beck, 1980). The students most likely to drop out of proprietary and public schools are poorer minority students. (Wilms, 1980). A poor student who fails either of the first two grades has only a twenty percent chance of graduating. (Beck, 1980).

Poor academic performance seems to be the best indicator for identifying potential dropouts. Studies of the achievement scores of dropouts have shown a history of below

average achievement. Students who are rebellious, delinquent, or chronically truant also drop out at a higher rate. Many female dropouts cite marriage or pregnancy as reasons for leaving school. The most frequent reason given for dropping out of school, however, is lack of interest. Thirty-nine percent of the dropouts in a New Mexico study dropped out for reasons related to motivation or interest. (Calvatta, 1984).

Many organizations are concerned with the plight of our nation's dropouts. Dropouts have more difficulty finding and holding jobs and earn less than graduates. The dropout's hourly earning rate is from seven to twenty-one percent less than the graduate's (Levine, 1981), and he earns approximately sixty dollars less per week. In addition, low skill jobs are disappearing from the market. By 1990, the ratio of skilled to unskilled jobs will be one to five. It is predicted that in future decades fifty to sixty percent of all new and replacement jobs will require a college education.

The consequences of the dropout's inability to find work are felt by society when the dropout turns to unemployment, welfare, or crime. In some states, seventy to ninety percent of the prison population consists of dropouts. Seventy-five percent of the young people in juvenile court proceedings are

dropouts. More than half of the nation's prison inmates are dropouts. It has been estimated that the annual cost of housing a prison inmate is $15,000, more than the cost of a year of education at either Harvard or Yale. The annual cost to the American citizens in order to provide for these dropouts and their families is estimated to be more than $75 billion dollars per year.

A study done by DePoyster and Phifer in 1969 of dropouts in Alcorn and Tishomingo counties in Mississippi indicates that little has been done to solve the dropout problem over a twenty year period. The study identified nine cultural patterns that the subject dropouts had in common. They are as follows:

1. The subject in the lower grades, especially, is overage in grade.
2. His attendance record in school is very poor.
3. He has a high rate of previous failures.
4. Most dropouts have failed one or most of the first three grades.
5. All indications are that the student comes from a low socio-economic and educational background.
6. The parents attitude toward school and school activities was not considered to be supportive.
7. Contrary to some popular beliefs, the dropout was

not an isolate, but was accepted by members of his peer group.

8. Likewise, the subjects had presented little or no discipline problems prior to withdrawal.
9. Contrary to some beliefs, the subject was living with both parents and the mother occupied the role of housewife.

This study suggested that there is strong evidence to support the contention that school, especially in the lower grades, "just isn't fun". It also found the data to be conclusive that failure, especially in the lower grades, is a major indicator of withdrawal. In the cases of those students who dropped out in the eleventh and twelfth grades it was found that in almost every instance for the males the reason was an economic one, such as a need for an automobile or a motorcycle. The reason supplied by most of the females in this age group who dropped out was primarily marriage.

Perhaps an accurate identification as to the specific reason a student drops out will lead to specific remedies in the prevention process. Mississippi will become stronger economically, culturally, and in every other positive criterion if the dropout rate is reduced.

METHOD

There were two populations represented in this study. The first was superintendents (or their assistants) in the 153 school districts in Mississippi. The second population was represented by educators at all levels in the three gulf coast counties of south Mississippi. A simple random sample selected 30 superintendents from the Group 1 population. Graduate students interviewed 70 teachers, counselors, administrators, and other school personnel as they found them at school sites in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties to make up the sample for Group 2.

The structured interview instrument was developed by students enrolled in research methodology (Appendix A). A small group served as a "pilot" sample to refine and help to rewrite the questions. Another research methodology class completed the instrument to establish reliability and validity.

Two graduate assistants provided instruction to graduate student participants in how to interview personally or by telephone. All of the randomly selected superintendents were polled by telephone. Distant sites were polled by telephone in the three coastal counties.

When all of the instruments had been completed data were

coded and the "CrossTabs" and "Frequency Distribution" segments of SPSS-X were used to analyze the information. Chi square was used to test hypotheses at the .05 level of confidence.

Data Collection and Analysis

There were 29 respondents in Group 1, the randomly selected group of superintendents. One person chose not to participate. The 29 responding were superintendents or one of the central office assistants. Nine of the respondents were from school districts south of Interstate 20 and 20 were from districts north of Interstate 20.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Item	Number	Percent
Group 1 (random)	29	29.6
Group 2 (coastal Adm)	25	25.5
(coastal other)	43	43.9
Missing cases	1	1.0
Totals N =	98	100.0
District (kind)		
County	22	22.7
Municipal	75	77.3
Missing cases	1	

The 69 participants in Group 2 represent a little more than 70 percent of the total participants. Twenty-two of the participants were from county districts, 75 from municipal districts, and one did not respond.

Harrison County had the largest number of participants (38) representing nearly 39 percent of the total. Jackson County had the next highest total with 21 followed closely by the randomly selected group in north Mississippi with 20. Administrators made up 55 percent of both samples while teachers were next with nearly 28 percent.

The median years of experience shown was 19.5 with nearly 29 percent of the cases shown as 25 years or over. This was not entirely unexpected since the random sample included all superintendents.

By Location	N	Percent
Hancock County	10	10.2
Harrison County	38	38.8
Jackson County	21	21.4
South Mississippi	9	9.2
North Mississippi	20	20.4
By Position		
Teacher	27	27.6
Counselor	12	12.2

Administrator	54	55.1
Other	5	5.1
By Years of Experience		
0 - 4	9	9.6
5 - 9	6	6.4
10 -14	15	16.0
15 -19	17	18.1
20 -24	20	21.3
25 and over	27	28.7
Missing cases	4	

Forty five of the participants had earned a masters degree or 56.3 percent of the total. There were 12.5 percent with doctorates and 15 percent with bachelors and 15 percent with specialists.

By Highest Degree		
Bachelors	12	15.0
Masters	45	56.3
Specialists	12	15.0
Doctorate	10	12.5
Other	1	1.2
Missing	18	

The responses to items 1 through 12 are shown on the same basis as in the "analysis section", i. e., random responses, coastal administrators, and coastal other. Data are also available showing responses for other characteristics in the Appendices.

Item 1 on the interview guide requested that the respondent estimate the percentage of dropouts in his/her school district for the most recent school year.

Item 1. Estimate of Dropout Percentages

Administrators from the random and coastal groups gave a median estimate of four percent. Teachers, counselors, and others in the 'other' category estimated a median of seven percent.

Percentage	Position		
	Random	Coastal Adm	Other
0 - 2	8	11	13
3 - 5	10	3	3
6 - 8		3	6
9 - 11	2	2	3
12 - 14	2	0	5
15 +	5	5	13

Item 2. Do you have a planned program to prevent dropouts?

Approximately 76 percent of the random group indicated a planned prevention program compared to same percentage for coastal administrators and 80 percent of the 'others'.

	Yes	No
Random	22	7
Coastal (Adm)	19	6
Other	35	9

Item 3. Is there a monitor for dropouts in your district?

All three groups showed a high percentage stating that a monitor was assigned to trace dropouts. Random and 'other' groups were higher (90's percentage) compared to about 72 percent of the coastal administrators.

	Yes	No
Random	27	2
Coastal (Adm)	18	7
Other	40	4

Item 3a. Position of the monitor

There was a minor difference in the position named for those who did indicate that they had someone assigned to monitor the dropouts. The random and coastal administrators named administrators more often than counselors while

counselors and teachers named counselors more often.

	Random	Coastal (Adm)	Other
Counselor	9	6	13
Administrator	14	8	9
Other	4	2	8

Item 4. Who has the major responsibility for preventing dropouts?

Administrators, random and coastal, named teachers and the school most often compared to a substantial majority giving credit to parents as reported by counselors and teachers.

	Random	Coastal (Adm)	Other
Teachers	5	4	8
School	10	7	6
Parents	7	9	29
Community	2	1	0
Other	4	4	1

Item 5. Estimate of District Dropouts to Neighbors.

Approximately 82 percent of the randomly selected administrators estimated that their school district dropouts were fewer or about the same as their neigboring districts. Two-thirds of the coastal administrators felt that their dropouts were lower than that of their neighbors. Less than one-half

of the teachers and counselors felt that their districts were less than neighboring districts, however, a substantial number indicated 'about the same' as a response.

	Random	Coastal (Adm)	Other
Fewer	12	14	20
More	5	1	2
About the same	11	6	14
No Opinion	1	4	8

Item 6. Estimate of District Dropouts to State.

Random, coastal, and other categories indicated that the estimate of their school district dropouts was less than that of the state.

	Random	Coastal (Adm)	Other
Fewer	12	14	20
More	5	1	2
About the same	11	6	14
No opinion	1	4	8

Item 7. Estimate of District Dropouts to Nation.

The respondents indicated that their school districts were lower than those of the nation when estimating the drop-out rates for the most recent school year.

	Random	Coastal (Adm)	Other
Fewer	12	8	18
More	7	5	10
About the same	3	5	7
No opinion	7	7	9

Item 8. What is the Major Reason for Student Dropouts?

Those polled indicated a major reason for student dropouts followed by a second major reason. School and home related reasons were indicated by all three of the respondent categories. The Appendices show the actual responses as they were tabulated.

	Random	Coastal (Adm	Other
School related reasons	7	14	15
Home related reasons	9	9	20
Economic reasons	2	1	1
Community/sociological	9	1	8
Other	2	0	0

Item 9. What is the 2nd Major Reason for Student Dropouts?

	Random	Coastal(Adm)	Other
School related reasons	17	9	16
Home related reasons	9	13	10
Economic reasons	1	1	6
Community/sociological	2	2	7
Other	0	0	5

Item 10: If financial restraints were lifted, what would be your first step in reducing the number of dropouts? (See Appendix B)

Item 11: Has your school conducted staff development on dropouts within the past calendar year?

Random and coastal administrators said that his/her district had conducted a staff development program on dropouts (about 75 percent) while teachers and counselors responded that about 44 percent of their districts had conducted staff development dropout programs.

	Yes	No
Random	23	6
Coastal (Adm)	12	11
Other	19	24

Item 12: How many cumulative folders have not been requested for students who did not report to school this

year? (Answered by principals only)

The estimate of the number of cumulative folders in a given school ranged from 0 to more than 45. Seventeen principals indicated a median of 14.5 unsolicited cumulative folders in their schools. The information request on folders represented the individual schools and not school districts.

Number	Random	Coastal
0 - 4	1	3
5 - 9	0	0
10 - 14	0	5
15 - 19	0	4
20 - 24	0	1
25 - 39	0	0
40+	0	3

State and National Data

According to the Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education (1988), the dropout rate for all schools in the state was 2.12 percent for the 1986-87 school year. This was down from the 2.34 percent shown for the 1985-86 school year. The national dropout rate for the 1985-86 school year was 1.73 percemt. These data were the most recent available.

Results

Table 2 shows estimates of dropout percentages compared

to observed dropout frequencies for random, coastal (adm), and others. There was no significant difference in the responses of random, coastal(adm), and others with respect to estimates. Chi square = 3.28, df 2, p = .19.

Table 2

Estimates Compared to Actual

Category	Random		Coastal (Adm)		Other	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Over	20	70	14	47	26	68
Correct	3	10	6	20	3	8
Under	3	10	8	27	9	24
Missing	3	10	2	7	0	0
Total	29	100	30	100	38	100

Table 3 compares actual dropout percentages in the random sample to the state and national dropout percentages. There was no significant difference between the actual dropout rate of the random sample and that of the national average or of the state average. A t-test for correlated means show a t value of - 1.00, df = 27, p = .16. Since there was no difference at the national level, obviously a test at the state level was not necessary.

Table 3

County/District	District %	State %	National %
Participant 1	3.99	2.12	1.73
Participant 2	0.80	2.12	1.73
Participant 3	2.13	2.12	1.73
Participant 4	1.10	2.12	1.73
Participant 5	2.35	2.12	1.73
Participant 6	1.29	2.12	1.73
Participant 7	1.78	2.12	1.73
Participant 8	1.17	2.12	1.73
Participant 9	1.19	2.12	1.73
Participant 10	1.32	2.12	1.73
Participant 11	1.21	2.12	1.73
Participant 12	2.20	2.12	1.73
Participant 13	3.05	2.12	1.73
Participant 14	1.19	2.12	1.73
Participant 15	1.67	2.12	1.73
Participant 16	2.11	2.12	1.73
Participant 17	1.01	2.12	1.73
Participant 18	1.97	2.12	1.73
Participant 19	0.30	2.12	1.73
Participant 20	2.39	2.12	1.73
Participant 21	2.51	2.12	1.73

Continued

Participant 22	3.36	2.12	1.73
Participant 23	2.69	2.12	1.73
Participant 24	2.54	2.12	1.73
Participant 25	1.76	2.12	1.73
Participant 26	0.92	2.12	1.73
Participant 27	1.92	2.12	1.73
Participant 28	1.11	2.12	1.73
Participant 29	4.18	2.12	1.73

Table 4 compares actual dropout percentages in the nonrandom sample to the state and national dropout percentages. The dropout rate in the nonrandom sample indicated a significant difference when comparing the local districts to the national average. It was shown that $t = -2.55$, $df = 9$, $p = .016$. A t test for correlated means was used. A t test was also used to compare nonrandom and state averages. The results were $t = -.85$, $df = 20$, $p = .21$.

Table 4

County/District	District %	State %	National %
District 1	3.63	2.12	1.73
District 2	2.59	2.12	1.73
District 3	2.53	2.12	1.73
District 4	2.82	2.12	1.73
District 5	2.90	2.12	1.73
District 6	1.36	2.12	1.73
District 7	2.43	2.12	1.73
District 8	1.79	2.12	1.73
District 9	1.71	2.12	1.73
District 10	1.03	2.12	1.73
District 11	2.68	2.12	1.73

Note: The State and National dropout rates were computed in the following way. According to the ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (1988), there were 10,592 dropouts and an end of first month enrollment of 498,639 students, yielding a 2.12 percent dropout rate for Mississippi.

National data were obtained from Richard Whalen of the United States Department of Education, Information Services. For the 1985-86 school year, there were 682,000 dropouts and a reported enrollment of 39,513,000 students (K-12), yielding a 1.73 percent dropout rate for the nation during this school year.

Data Summary

The nonrandom population was subdivided into administrators and 'other'. The 'other' category was made up of

teachers, counselors, and other professional education personnel. Randomly selected administrators were then compared to their nonrandom counterparts. Differences were also examined between administrators and 'other' professional people.

The hypotheses as stated in the introduction were as follows:

HO1: There will be no significant difference in the rate of dropouts when comparing schools in the selected school districts with nonrandom districts.

A Chi Square test of the hypothesis shows a score of 1.13 with 1 degree of freedom. The probability of .29 is sufficient to fail to reject the null hypothesis. The differences in the random and nonrandom districts were not significant.

HO2: There will be no significant difference in the dropout rates of school districts in the random sample which have formal dropout prevention programs and those who do not.

Results indicate a Chi Square of .60, df = 1, and a probability of .44. The null hypothesis was not rejected. Formal dropout programs did not make a significant difference.

HO3: There will be no significant difference in the dropout rates of school districts in the random sample which

have staff development on the problem of dropouts and those who do not.

The test by Chi Square was not significant. Chi Square = .40, df = 1, p = .52. Six of the twenty-nine respondents did not provide staff development on dropouts. It was assumed that the percentage participating would negate any significant difference.

HO4: There will be no significant difference in the dropout rates of the selected school districts when compared to the State of Mississippi.

No significant difference was found between the dropout rate of the selected school districts, random and nonrandom, when compared to the Mississippi average. Chi Square = 2.13, df = 1, p = .14 (random). A t test for correlated means shows t = -.85, df = 20, p = .21 (nonrandom). Both tests show no significant difference.

HO5: There will be no significant difference in the dropout rates of the selected school districts when compared to the nation.

A significant difference was found when comparing the nonrandom group to a nationwide average. t = -2.55, df = 20, p = .02. This indicates that the dropout rate for the non-random group was significantly higher than the nation. Conversely, the random group shows no significant difference

when compared to the nation. A t test for correlated means yields a value of -1.00, df = 56, p = .16. It should be pointed out that no significant difference was found between the random and nonrandom groups, however, the actual difference was enough to bring about significance for the nonrandom sample.

Unanticipated results included:

1. There was a significant difference in the way county and municipal respondents estimated comparisons of their own dropouts to their neighbors.
2. County school districts had a significantly higher participation rate in staff development related to dropouts than did municipal districts.
3. There was a significant difference by position (teacher, counselor, administrator, other) as to who is responsible for preventing student dropouts.
4. There was a significant difference ($p < .01$) between the estimate of the rate of dropouts in the district and staff development of the district.
5. There was a significant difference ($p < .001$) between the estimates of local districts when comparing their dropout rates with the state and the nation.

Recommendations.

Apparently there has been an upsurge in the interest of dropout study and prevention in the past one or two years. Those who participated in this study indicated some kind of positive action in progress or in the planning stage. It appears that the time is right for increased emphasis by all concerned.

This study touched lightly on the subject of dropouts who may be unrecorded victims. The number of unrequested cumulative folders in the offices of principals throughout the state may give some indication as to the scope of the unrecorded dropout problem.

What about the last month of school? How are dropouts treated? If a student stops attending during the final month is he/she treated as absent or a dropout? There are many facets of the dropout problem that have not been addressed. Perhaps the least interested is the dropout herself/himself. Who has the major responsibility for preventing dropouts?

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APPENDICES

INTERVIEW GUIDE
DROPOUT PROJECT

INTERVIEWER_____DATE_____

DISTRICT/SCHOOL_____COUNTY_____

INTERVIEWEE_____POSITION_____

NUMBER OF YEARS EXPERIENCE*_____ HIGHEST DEGREE_____

THIS SYSTEM _____

THIS POSITION _____

*PRIOR TO THIS YEAR

1. Would you estimate the percentage of dropouts your district/school has each school year? (based on end of 1st month enrollment)

   ANSWER _____%

2. Do you have or have you had in the last three years a planned program to prevent dropouts?

   ANSWER Y N

3. Is there a person in the district/school who is responsible for monitoring dropouts?

   ANSWER Y N

   If yes, what position _____

4. Who has the major responsibility for preventing dropouts?

   a. teachers _____

   b. the school _____

   c. parents _____

   d. the community _____

   e. other (list) _____

5. This school district has _____ dropouts than other districts on the coast (Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties).

   a. fewer _____

   b. more _____

   c. about the same _____

   d. no opinion _____

6. This school district has _____ dropouts than other districts in the State of Mississippi (average).

   a. fewer _____

   b. more _____

   c. about the same _____

   d. no opinion _____

7. This school district has _____ dropouts than other districts in the nation.

   a. fewer _____

   b. more _____

   c. about the same _____

   d. no opinion _____

8. In your opinion what is the most common cause for student dropouts?

   ANSWER_____

9. In your opinion what is the second most common cause for student dropouts?

   ANSWER_____

10. If financial restraints were lifted, what would be your first step in reducing the dropout rate?

ANSWER_____

11. Has your district/school conducted at least one staff development workshop on the problem of dropouts within the past calendar year?

ANSWER Y N

TO BE ANSWERED ONLY BY PRINCIPALS

Please check your cumulative folder files and determine the number of folders on hand that have not been requested for students who did not report to school this year.

NUMBER _____

Thank you very much for participating. This study should be completed about the middle of May. Would you like for your school to have a copy of the results?

YES _____

NO _____

COMMENTS

Item 8 asked participants to express their opinion as to the most common cause for student dropouts. Responses were broken down into the following categories:

1. Home related
2. School related
3. Community/sociological related
4. Economics related
5. Other

Nearly thirty-nine percent of the respondents cited home related reasons as the most common cause for student dropouts in their district. Approximately thirty-seven percent cited school related reasons and eighteen percent cited community/sociological related reasons. Responses in the other categories were negligible.

Responses to item 9, which asked respondents to offer a second most common cause for student dropouts, were similar to responses to item 8, with the exception that school related reasons were cited most often and home related reasons came in second.

Item 10 asked participants to tell what they would do to begin reducing the dropout rate if financial restraints were lifted. Responses were broken down into the following categories:

1. Increase involvement of parents and community
2. Hire more personnel
3. Improve/expand the curriculum
4. Provide alternative schools/programs
5. Offer a reward system
6. Improve the classroom atmosphere
7. Provide better counseling programs
8. Other

Of the 98 surveyed, 97 responded, yielding a 99% response rate. The following comments were made in response to the question posed.

CATEGORY 1

#1: I would develop a school-home liaison team to work with parents and potential dropouts.

#2: I would put pressure on parents to realize the importance of having children in school.

#3: I would begin counseling and working with parents.

#4. I would begin home counseling and visitation.

#5. I would start a new project that would do a needs assessment with community involvement.

#6: Money is not the problem. We need to educate parents and faculty to make an early identification of potential dropouts.

#7: I would begin an early monitoring of the environment in order to determine where and when dropout tendencies occur.

#8: I would hire a person in the school to conduct home visits when problems arise.

#9: I would try to get more parental involvement.

#10: I would make parents liable to the compulsory law if students do not attend school.

#11: I would increase the age in the compulsory attendance law to 16.

#12: I would increase the age of the compulsory attendance law to 16.

CATEGORY 2

#13: I would hire counselors to work only with potential dropouts.

#14: I would employ personnel to deal with the problem.

#15: I would hire personnel to check on absenteeism and start new programs to meet the needs of the children.

#16: I would employ special counselors at each school to work with potential dropouts.

#17: I would have smaller classes, add assistants to third

grade, and hire one more counselor.

#18: I would hire assistant principles.

#19: I would add more staff members to provide additional instruction in learning areas.

#20: I would lower the teacher/student ratio.

#21: I would hire more people to keep track of students.

#22: I would reduce the teacher/student ratio by hiring more teachers.

#23: I would have an assigned attendance officer.

#24: I would add more teachers and raise the one-to-one attention given to each student.

CATEGORY 3

#25: I would offer year-round schooling and more technical schools at an earlier age.

#26: I would offer summer training for the GED and give students an incentive to perform. I would also provide babysitting fees, etc., so that students can attend class.

#27: I would use the extended school year.

#28: I would provide more choices in school.

#29: I would upgrade and improve educational and extracurricular offerings.

#30: I would offer more remedial reading courses.

#31: I would offer more courses to meet the needs of all

students.

#32: I would put into the curriculum courses in which students could be successful.

#33: I would begin a reorganization of the curriculum.

#34: I would offer courses and broaden the curriculum to interest more students.

#35: I would offer more courses.

CATEGORY 4

#36: I would provide alternative programs for students.

#37: I would provide an alternative curriculum.

#38: I would start an alternative program for high risk students.

#39: I would start a vocational school with no restraints so that you could begin to channel kids into it and teach them a trade in the eighth grade.

#40: I would set up on alternative school.

#41: I would provide alternative education where students don't have to complete academic requirements to get a diploma, but receive instead a vocational certificate.

#42: I would institute preschool programs.

#43: I would provide an alternative school with an individualized curriculum and a less structured environment.

#44: I would provide an alternative school situation.

#45: I would set up a program for slow learners, possibly in an alternative setting and not totally structured.

#46: I would provide more vocational opportunities and more counseling service.

#47: I would begin an alternative school.

#48: I would provide an alternative education program.

#49: I would provide alternative programs for these students.

#50: I would require (by law) that students remain in school and implement alternative programs and counseling for dropouts and potential dropouts.

#51: I would provide an alternative school program.

#52: I would provide alternative schooling.

#53: I would provide alternative schooling.

#54: I would provide an educational/work rehabilitation type program geared toward some type of diploma so that the student has an incentive to attend school.

#55: I would provide an alternative school.

#56: I would provide an alternative school.

#57: I would provide an alternative school.

#58: I would provide special programs for students experiencing difficulty (ex. vocational).

#59: I would provide alternative schools.

#60: I would provide alternative educational programs.

#61: I would provide more vocational training.

#62: I would provide pre-vocational programs on a junior high level.

CATEGORY 5

#63: I would pay kids to attend and show progress.

#64: I would offer a reward program for attendance.

#65: I would get something to benefit students who are potential dropouts.

#66: I would provide a short term job for them so that they could come to school and have time to study. Too many kids have jobs working too many hours.

#67: I would pay kids to come to school.

#68: I would pay students.

CATEGORY 6

#69: I would see that we meet the needs of students academically and provide more vocational education as an alternative.

#70: I would individualize instruction to meet the individual needs of students, both academically and emotionally.

#71: I would see that more personal attention is given to students.

#72: I would create special classes or activities to expand and develop talents and interests of children who do not fit into the molds of LD or gifted, but who are not succeeding for whatever reason. I would also create

opportunities for success at early ages.

#73: I would find something of interest for all children.

#74: I would raise teacher pay to attract the "best" teachers.

#75: I would work with teachers to create a positive "you can learn!" atmosphere.

#76: I would make school fun and interesting and provide tools to equip students to work in the work environment.

#77: I would build a program that deals with self-concept and the student's image of success.

#78: I would hire dynamic individuals (not necessarily certified teachers) to teach classes in their areas of expertise and share their enthusiasm for learning.

#79: I would provide tutors in lower grades.

#80: I would provide an environment more conducive to learning. I would also bring parents in and work on self-esteem.

#81: I would purchase more support material to show alternatives to dropping out.

#82: I would acquire more audio-visual material for classrooms.

#83: I would upgrade the type of learning materials (computers, ETV, etc.) to enrich and reinforce what is being taught and increase creativity in the classroom.

#84: I would buy computers for every student.

#85: I would provide individualized instruction through computers, allowing students to proceed at their own pace.

CATEGORY 7

#86: I would do an intense study to identify potential dropouts, develop a program for success, and develop an intensive individual plan.

#87: I would develop a more comprehensive program involving counseling and remediation (other than special education).

#88: I would assign five teachers to each group of fifteen students to monitor students and identify high risk students and provide counseling.

#89: I would organize a system of dropout identification and prevention.

#90: I would do a variety of things. I would provide special help for students who need academic help and tutoring, and provide more counseling and social work.

#91: I would have those who have dropped out to come and talk to the students. I would also suggest to students that they try making it on their own for a summer with no assistance.

#92: I would have daily counseling with students identified

as potential dropouts.

#93: I would provide better counseling for potential dropouts.

#94: I would recall latest dropouts.

#95: I would identify potential dropouts.

CATEGORY 8

#96: I would provide a dorm-like facility for students to use.

#97: I would set up a boarding house.

There were a total of 12 responses which fit into category 1. Of these 12, 10 were from the three coastal counties which were nonrandomly selected (1 from Hancock, 7 from Harrison and 2 from Jackson). The remaining 2 responses were from Covington and Smith county.

Of the 12 Category 2 responses, 8 were from the coastal counties Harrison and Jackson (7 and 1, respectively) and the remaining 4 were from Quitman, Sunflower, Hinds and Marshall county.

Of the 11 Category 3 responses, 6 were from the three coastal counties (2 from Hancock, 3 from Harrison and 1 from Jackson). The remaining 5 responses were from Lincoln, Washington, Sharkey Issequenna, Calhoun and Attala county.

There were a total of 27 responses which fit into

Category 4. Of these, 23 were from the three coastal counties (5 from Hancock, 7 from Harrison and 11 from Jackson). The remaining 4 responses were from Washington, Lowndes, Monroe, and Neshoba county.

Of the 6 Category 5 responses, 4 were from the three coastal counties (1 from Hancock, 2 from Harrison and 1 from Jackson). The remaining 2 responses were from Bolivar and Tate county.

There were 17 Category 6 responses, 10 of which were from the three coastal counties (1 from Hancock, 3 from Jackson and 6 from Harrison). The remaining 7 responses were from Montgomery, Lauderdale, Lafayette, Pontotoc, Tippah, Jefferson, and Oktibbehah county.

There were 10 responses which fit into Category 7, 5 of which were from the coastal counties Harrison and Jackson (4 and 1, respectively). The remaining 5 responses were from Jasper (2), Chickasaw, Hinds and Lamar county.

Of the 2 Category 8 responses, 1 was from Harrison and 1 was from Jackson county.